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ADDRESS  
OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES

AT  
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

JANUARY 8, 1915



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## ADDRESS.

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GOVERNOR RALSTON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: You have given me a most royal welcome, for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is rather lonely living in Washington. I have been confined for two years at hard labor, and even now I feel that I am simply out on parole. You notice that one of the most distinguished members of the United States Senate is here to see that I go back. And yet, with sincere apologies to the Senate and House of Representatives, I want to say that I draw more inspiration from you than I do from them. They, like myself, are only servants of the people of the United States. Our sinews consist in your sympathy and support, and our renewal comes from contact with you and with the strong movements of public opinion in the country.

That is the reason why I for one would prefer that our thoughts should not too often cross the ocean, but should center themselves upon the policies and duties of the United States. If we think rightly of the United States, when the time comes we shall know how this country can serve the world. I will borrow a very interesting phrase from a distinguished gentleman of my acquaintance and beg that you will "keep your moral powder dry."

But I have come here on Jackson Day. If there are Republicans present, I hope they will feel the compelling influences of such a day. There was nothing mild about Andrew Jackson; that is the reason I spoke of the "compelling influences" of the day. Andrew Jackson was a forthright man who believed everything he did believe in fighting earnest. And really, ladies and gentlemen, in public life that is the only sort of man worth thinking about for a moment. If I was not ready to fight for everything I believe in, I would think it my duty to go back and take a back seat. I like, therefore, to breathe the air of Jackson Day. I like to be reminded of the old militant hosts of Democracy which I believe have come to life again in our time. The United States had almost forgotten that it must keep its fighting ardor in behalf of mankind when Andrew Jackson became President; and you will notice that whenever the United States forgets its ardor for mankind it is necessary that a Democrat should be elected President.

The trouble with the Republican party is that it has not had a new idea for thirty years. I am not speaking as a politician; I am speaking as an historian. I have looked for new ideas in the records and I have not found any proceeding from the Republican ranks. They have had leaders from time to time who suggested new ideas, but they never did anything to carry them out. I suppose there was no harm in their talking, provided they could not do anything. Therefore, when it was necessary to say that we had talked about things long enough which it was necessary to do, and the time had come to do them, it was indispensable that a Democrat should be elected President.

I would not speak with disrespect of the Republican party. I always speak with great respect of the past. The past was necessary to the present, and was a sure prediction of the future. The Republican party is still a covert and refuge for those who are afraid, for those who want to consult their grandfathers about everything. You will notice that most of the advice taken by the Republican party is taken from gentlemen old enough to be grandfathers, and that when they claim that a reaction has taken place, they react to the reelection of the oldest members of their party. They will not trust the youngsters. They are afraid the youngsters may have something up their sleeve.

You will see, therefore, that I have come to you in the spirit of Jackson Day. I got very tired staying in Washington and saying sweet things. I wanted to come out and get contact with you once more and say what I really thought.

My friends, what I particularly want you to observe is this, that politics in this country does not depend any longer upon the regular members of either party. There are not enough regular Republicans in this country to take and hold national power; and I must immediately add there are not enough regular Democrats in this country to do it, either. This country is guided and its policy is determined by the independent voter; and I have come to ask you how we can best prove to the independent voter that the instrument he needs is the Democratic party, and that it would be hopeless for him to attempt to use the Republican party. I do not have to prove it; I admit it.

What seems to me perfectly evident is this: That if you made a rough reckoning, you would have to admit that only about one-third of the Republican party is progressive; and you would also have to admit that about two-thirds of the Democratic party is progressive. Therefore, the independent progressive voter finds a great deal more company in the Democratic ranks than in the Republican ranks. I say a great deal more, because there are Democrats who are sitting on the breeching strap: there are Democrats who are holding back;

there are Democrats who are nervous. I dare say they were born with that temperament. And I respect the conservative temper. I claim to be an animated conservative myself, because being a conservative I understand to mean being a man not only who preserves what is best in the Nation but who sees that in order to preserve it you dare not stand still but must move forward. The virtue of America is not statical; it is dynamic. All the forces of America are forces in action or else they are forces of inertia.

What I want to point out to you—and I believe that this is what the whole country is beginning to perceive—is this, that there is a larger body of men in the regular ranks of the Democratic party who believe in the progressive policies of our day and mean to see them carried forward and perpetuated than there is in the ranks of the Republican party. How can it be otherwise, gentlemen? The Democratic party, and only the Democratic party, has carried out the policies which the progressive people of this country have desired. There is not a single great act of this present great Congress which has not been carried out in obedience to the public opinion of America; and the public opinion of America is not going to permit any body of men to go backward with regard to these great matters.

Let me instance a single thing: I want to ask the business men here present if this is not the first January in their recollection that did not bring a money stringency for the time being, because of the necessity of paying out great sums of money by way of dividends and the other settlements which come at the first of the year? I have asked the bankers if that happened this year, and they say, "No; it did not happen; it could not happen under the Federal Reserve Act." We have emancipated the credits of this country; and is there anybody here who will doubt that the other policies that have given guaranty to this country that there will be free competition are policies which this country will never allow to be reversed? I have taken a long time, ladies and gentlemen, to select the Federal Trade Commission, because I wanted to choose men and be sure that I had chosen men who would be really serviceable to the business men of this country, great as well as small, the rank and the file. These things have been done and will never be undone. They were talked about and talked about with futility until a Democratic Congress attempted and achieved them.

But the Democratic party is not to suppose that it is done with the business. The Democratic party is still on trial. The Democratic party still has to prove to the independent voters of the country not only that it believes in these things, but that it will continue to work along these lines and that it will not allow any enemy of these things to break its ranks. This country is not going to use any

party that can not do continuous and consistent teamwork. If any group of men should dare to break the solidarity of the Democratic team for any purpose or from any motive, theirs will be a most unenviable notoriety and a responsibility which will bring deep bitterness to them. The only party that is serviceable to a nation is a party that can hold absolutely together and march with the discipline and with the zest of a conquering host.

I am not saying these things because I doubt that the Democratic party will be able to do this, but because I believe that as leader for the time being of that party I can promise the country that it will do these things. I know my colleagues at Washington; I know their spirit and their purpose; and I know that they have the same emotion, the same high emotion of public service, that I hope I have.

I want at this juncture to pay my tribute of respect and of affectionate admiration for the two great Democratic Senators from the State of Indiana. I have never had to lie awake nights wondering what they were going to do. And the country is not going to trouble itself, ladies and gentlemen, to lie awake nights and wonder what men are going to do. If they have to do that, they will choose other men. Teamwork all the time is what they are going to demand of us, and that is our individual as well as our collective responsibility. That is what Jackson stands for. If a man will not play with the team, then he does not belong to the team. You see, I have spent a large part of my life in college and I know what a team means when I see it; and I know what the captain of a team must have if he is going to win. So it is no idle figure of speech with me.

Now, what is their duty? You say, "Hasn't this Congress carried out a great program?" Yes, it has carried out a great program. It has had the most remarkable record that any Congress since the Civil War has had; and I say since the Civil War because I have not had time to think about those before the Civil War. But we are living at an extraordinary moment. The world has never been in the condition that it is in now, my friends. Half the world is on fire. Only America among the great powers of the world is free to govern her own life; and all the world is looking to America to serve its economic need. And while this is happening what is going on?

Do you know, gentlemen, that the ocean freight rates have gone up in some instances to ten times their ordinary figure? and that the farmers of the United States, those who raise grain and those who raise cotton—these things that are absolutely necessary to the world as well as to ourselves—can not get their due profit out of the great prices that they are willing to pay for these things on the other side of the sea, because practically the whole profit is eaten up by the

extortionate charges for ocean carriage? In the midst of this the Democrats propose a temporary measure of relief in a shipping bill. The merchants and the farmers of this country must have ships to carry their goods. Just at the present moment there is no other way of getting them than through the instrumentality that is suggested in the shipping bill. I hear it said in Washington on all hands that the Republicans in the United States Senate mean to talk enough to make the passage of that bill impossible. These self-styled friends of business, these men who say the Democratic party does not know what to do for business, are saying that the Democrats shall do nothing for business. I challenge them to show their right to stand in the way of the release of American products to the rest of the world! Who commissioned them—a minority, a lessening minority? (For they will be in a greater minority in the next Senate than in this.) You know it is the peculiarity of that great body that it has rules of procedure which make it possible for a minority to defy the Nation; and these gentlemen are now seeking to defy the Nation and prevent the release of American products to the suffering world which needs them more than it ever needed them before. Their credentials as friends of business and friends of America will be badly discredited if they succeed. If I were speaking from a selfish, partisan point of view, I could wish nothing better than that they should show their true colors as partisans and succeed. But I am not quite so malevolent as that. Some of them are misguided; some of them are blind; most of them are ignorant. I would rather pray for them than abuse them. The great voice of America ought to make them understand what they are said to be attempting now really means. I have to say “are said to be attempting,” because they do not come and tell me that they are attempting them. I do not know why. I would express my opinion of them in parliamentary language, but I would express it, I hope, no less plainly because couched in the terms of courtesy. This country is bursting its jacket, and they are seeing to it that the jacket is not only kept tight but is riveted with steel.

The Democratic party does know how to serve business in this country, and its future program is a program of service. We have cleared the decks. We have laid the lines now upon which business that was to do the country harm shall be stopped and an economic control which was intolerable shall be broken up. We have emancipated America, but America must do something with her freedom. There are great bills pending in the United States Senate just now that have been passed by the House of Representatives, which are intended as constructive measures in behalf of business—one great measure which will make available the enormous water



powers of this country for the industry of it; another bill which will unlock the resources of the public domain which the Republicans, desiring to save, locked up so that nobody could use them.

The reason I say the Republicans have not had a new idea in thirty years is that they have not known how to do anything except sit on the lid. If you can release the steam so that it will drive great industries, it is not necessary to sit on the lid. What we are trying to do in the great conservation bill is to carry out for the first time in the history of the United States a system by which the great resources of this country can be used instead of being set aside so that no man can get at them. I shall watch with a great deal of interest what the self-styled friends of business try to do to those bills. Do not misunderstand me. There are some men on that side of the Chamber who understand the value of these things and are standing valiantly by them, but they are a small minority. The majority that is standing by them is on our side of the Chamber, and they are the friends of America.

But there are other things which we have to do. Sometimes when I look abroad, my friends, and see the great mass of struggling humanity on this continent, it goes very much to my heart to see how many men are at a disadvantage and are without guides and helpers. Don't you think it would be a pretty good idea for the Democratic party to undertake a systematic method of helping the workingmen of America? There is one very simple way in which they can help the workingmen. If you were simply to establish a great Federal employment bureau, it would do a vast deal. By the Federal agencies which spread over this country men could be directed to those parts of the country, to those undertakings, to those tasks where they could find profitable employment. The labor of this country needs to be guided from opportunity to opportunity. We proved it the other day. We were told that in two States of the Union 30,000 men were needed to gather the crops. We suggested in a Cabinet meeting that the Department of Labor should have printed information about this in such form that it could be posted up in the post offices all over the United States, and that the Department of Labor should get in touch with the labor departments of the States, so that notice could go out from them, and their co-operation obtained. What was the result? Those 30,000 men were found and were sent to the places where they got profitable employment. I do not know any one thing that has happened in my administration that made me feel happier than that—that the job and the man had been brought together. It will not cost a great deal of money and it will do a great deal of service if the United States were to undertake to do such things systematically and all

the year round; and I for my part hope that it will do that. If I were writing an additional plank for a Democratic platform, I would put that in.

There is another thing that needs very much to be done. I am not one of those who doubt either the industry or the learning or the integrity of the courts of the United States, but I do know that they have a very antiquated way of doing business. I do know that the United States in its judicial procedure is many decades behind every other civilized Government in the world, and I say that it is an immediate and an imperative call upon us to rectify that, because the speediness of justice, the inexpensiveness of justice, the ready access to justice, is the greater part of justice itself. If you have to be rich to get justice, because of the cost of the very process itself, then there is no justice at all. So I say this is another direction in which we ought to be very quick to see the signs of the times and to help those who need to be helped.

Then there is something else. The Democrats have heard the Republicans talking about the scientific way in which to handle a tariff, though the Republicans have never given any exhibition of a knowledge of how to handle it scientifically. If it is scientific to put additional profits into the hands of those who are already getting the greater part of the profits, then they have been exceedingly scientific. It has been the science of selfishness; it has been the science of privilege. That kind of science I do not care to know anything about except enough to stop it. But if by scientific treatment of the tariff they mean adjustment to the actual trade conditions of America and the world, then I am with them; and I want to call their attention—for though they voted for it they apparently have not noticed it—to the fact that the bill which creates the new Trade Commission does that very thing. We were at pains to see that it was put in there. That commission is authorized and empowered to inquire into and report to Congress not only upon all the conditions of trade in this country, but upon the conditions of trade, the cost of manufacture, the cost of transportation—all the things that enter into the question of the tariff—in foreign countries and into all those questions of foreign combinations which affect international trade between Europe and the United States. It has the full powers which will guide Congress in the scientific treatment of questions of international trade. Being by profession a schoolmaster, I am glad to point that out to the class of uninstructed Republicans, though I have not always taught in the primary grade.

At every turn the things that the progressive Republicans have proposed that were practicable, the Democrats either have done or are immediately proposing to do. If that is not our bill of particu-

lars to satisfy the independent voters of the country, I would like to have one produced. There are things that the Progressive program contained which we, being constitutional lawyers, happened to know can not be done by the Congress of the United States. That is a detail which they seem to have overlooked. But so far as they can be done by State legislatures, I, for one, speaking for one Democrat, am heartily in favor of their being done. Because Democrats do not congregate merely in Washington. They congregate also in the State capitols, and they congregate there in very influential numbers and with very influential organizations.

Just before I came away from Washington I was going over some of the figures of the last elections, the elections of November last. The official returns have not all come in yet. I do not know why they are so slow in getting to us, but so far as they have come in they have given me this useful information, that taking the States where Senators were elected, and where Senators were not elected taking the election of Governors, and where Governors were not elected taking the returns for the State legislatures or for the Congressional delegates, the Democrats, reckoning State by State, would, if it had been a presidential year, have had a majority of about eighty in the Electoral College. Fortunately or unfortunately, this is not a presidential year; but the thing is significant to me for this reason. A great many people have been speaking of the Democratic party as a minority party. Well, if it is, it is not so much of a minority party as the Republican, and as between the minorities I think we can claim to belong to the larger minority. The moral of that is merely what I have already been pointing out to you, that neither party in its regular membership has a majority. I do not want to make the independent voter too proud of himself, but I have got to admit that he is our boss; and I am bound to admit that the things that he wants are, so far as I have seen them mentioned, things that I want.

I am not an independent voter, but I hope I can claim to be an independent person, and I want to say this distinctly: I do not love any party any longer than it continues to serve the immediate and pressing needs of America. I have been bred in the Democratic party; I love the Democratic party; but I love America a great deal more than I love the Democratic party; and when the Democratic party thinks that it is an end in itself, then I rise up and dissent. It is a means to an end, and its power depends, and ought to depend, upon its showing that it knows what America needs and is ready to give it what it needs. That is the reason I say to the independent voter you have got us in the palm of your hand. I do not happen to be one of your number but I recognize your supremacy, because I

read the election returns; and I have this ambition, my Democratic friends—I can avow it on Jackson day—I want to make every independent voter in this country a Democrat. It is a little cold and lonely out where he is, because, though he holds the balance of power, he is not the majority, and I want him to come in where it is warm. I want him to come in where there is a lot of good society, good companionship, where there are great emotions. That is what I miss in the Republican party; they do not seem to have any great emotions. They seem to think a lot of things, old things, but they do not seem to have any enthusiasm about anything.

There is one thing I have got a great enthusiasm about, I might almost say a reckless enthusiasm, and that is human liberty. The Governor has just now spoken about watchful waiting in Mexico. I want to say a word about Mexico, or not so much about Mexico as about our attitude towards Mexico. I hold it as a fundamental principle, and so do you, that every people has the right to determine its own form of government; and until this recent revolution in Mexico, until the end of the Diaz reign, eighty per cent. of the people of Mexico never had a “look in” in determining who should be their governors or what their government should be. Now, I am for the eighty per cent! It is none of my business, and it is none of your business, how long they take in determining it. It is none of my business, and it is none of yours, how they go about the business. The country is theirs. The Government is theirs. The liberty, if they can get it, and Godspeed them in getting it, is theirs. And so far as my influence goes while I am President nobody shall interfere with them.

That is what I mean by a great emotion, the great emotion of sympathy. Do you suppose that the American people are ever going to count a small amount of material benefit and advantage to people doing business in Mexico against the liberties and the permanent happiness of the Mexican people? Have not European nations taken as long as they wanted and spilt as much blood as they pleased in settling their affairs, and shall we deny that to Mexico because she is weak? No, I say! I am proud to belong to a strong nation that says, “This country which we could crush shall have just as much freedom in her own affairs as we have.” If I am strong, I am ashamed to bully the weak. In proportion to my strength is my pride in withholding that strength from the oppression of another people. And I know when I speak these things, not merely from the generous response with which they have just met from you, but from my long-time knowledge of the American people, that that is the sentiment of this great people. With all due respect to editors of great newspapers, I have to say to them that I seldom take my opinion of the American people from their editorials. When some

great dailies not very far from where I am temporarily residing thundered with rising scorn at watchful waiting, my confidence was not for a moment shaken. I knew what were the temper and principles of the American people. If I did not at least think I knew, I would emigrate, because I would not be satisfied to stay where I am. There may come a time when the American people will have to judge whether I know what I am talking about or not, but at least for two years more I am free to think that I do, with a great comfort in immunity in the time being.

It is, by the way, a very comforting thought that the next Congress of the United States is going to be very safely Democratic and that, therefore, we can all together feel as much confidence as Jackson did that we know what we are about. You know Jackson used to think that everybody who disagreed with him was an enemy of the country. I have never got quite that far in my thought, but I have ventured to think that they did not know what they were talking about, knowing that my fellow Democrats expected me to live up to the full stature of Jacksonian Democracy.

I feel, my friends, in a very confident mood to-day. I feel confident that we do know the spirit of the American people, that we do know the program of betterment which it will be necessary for us to undertake, that we do have a very reasonable confidence in the support of the American people. I have been talking with business men recently about the present state of mind of American business. There is nothing the matter with American business except a state of mind. I understand that your chamber of commerce here in Indianapolis is working now upon the motto "If you are going to buy it, buy it now." That is a perfectly safe maxim to act on. It is just as safe to buy it now as it ever will be, and if you start the buying there will be no end to it, and you will be a seller as well as a buyer. I am just as sure of that as I can be, because I have taken counsel with the men who know. I never was in business and, therefore, I have none of the prejudices of business. I have looked on and tried to see what the interests of the country were in business; I have taken counsel with men who did know, and their counsel is uniform, that all that is needed in America now is to believe in the future; and I can assure you as one of those who speak for the Democratic Party that it is perfectly safe to believe in the future. We are so much the friends of business that we were for a little time the enemies of those who were trying to control business. I say "for a little time" because we are now reconciled to them. They have graciously admitted that we had a right to do what we did do, and they have very handsomely said that they were going to play the game.

I believe—I always have believed—that American business men were absolutely sound at heart, but men immersed in business do a lot of things that opportunity offers which in other circumstances they would not do; and I have thought all along that all that was necessary to do was to call their attention sharply to the kind of reforms in business which were needed and that they would acquiesce. Why, I believe they have heartily acquiesced. There is all the more reason, therefore, that, great and small, we should be confident in the future.

And what a future it is, my friends! Look abroad upon the troubled world! Only America at peace! Among all the great powers of the world only America saving her power for her own people! Only America using her great character and her great strength in the interests of peace and of prosperity! Do you not think it likely that the world will some time turn to America and say, "You were right and we were wrong. You kept your head when we lost ours. You tried to keep the scale from tipping, and we threw the whole weight of arms in one side of the scale. Now, in your self-possession, in your coolness, in your strength, may we not turn to you for counsel and for assistance?" Think of the deep-wrought destruction of economic resources, of life, and of hope that is taking place in some parts of the world, and think of the reservoir of hope, the reservoir of energy, the reservoir of sustenance that there is in this great land of plenty! May we not look forward to the time when we shall be called blessed among the nations, because we succored the nations of the world in their time of distress and of dismay? I for one pray God that that solemn hour may come, and I know the solidity of character and I know the exaltation of hope, I know the big principle with which the American people will respond to the call of the world for this service. I thank God that those who believe in America, who try to serve her people, are likely to be also what America herself from the first hoped and meant to be—the servant of mankind.









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